



ELIMINATING DISTRACTIONS

Those two words epitomize what touring pros are trying to do while competing. Distractions can come in many forms and to eliminate them, you need to recognize them. So...what is a distraction? Anything that takes your focus away from the task at hand.

Here are some examples:

- Weather extremes such as cold, heat, wind and storms.
- Time constraints.
- Physical problems of any kind.
- Fatigue, whether it be physical, intellectual or emotional.
- Worry or even excitement about an upcoming event or situation in life.
- A playing partner with bad etiquette.
- Players in the field that you feel would beat you easily or that you would beat easily.
- Worrying about what others will think of your performance.
- Memories of bad results in the past.
- Trying to get a good score back to the clubhouse before the round is over.

These are just a few of the things that can become distractions during a round of golf and keep you from getting into the state of mind that allows you to perform at your highest level. What would be the key then...to eliminating them? “Staying in the present.”

It doesn't really make any difference which of the above-mentioned distractions are present. Staying in the present is the key to keeping your mind focused and calm. Your mind simply must focus on the shot at hand and not stray into other areas.

If your mind doesn't experience distractions...you are not human. The key is to recognize what thoughts are not productive for the task at hand and go through a process of eliminating them as quickly as possible.



Practiced often enough, you will create the habit of staying disciplined in your thought processes and not allow unproductive thoughts to reside in your mind for any length of time. Consequently, your mind will remain as calm as possible during your round which will enable you shoot scores much closer to your potential.

Let me suggest having a consistent pre-shot routine. One that you have done so many times that it happens without contrivance. It will need to be contrived during the building process...while you are adding elements to it and putting them all together. However, after you have done it literally hundreds or even thousands of times, it will simply be a pattern of movements and thoughts that happen out of habit.

These thoughts and movements serve to separate your mind from distractions and put you into a semi-trance if you will...which will let your instinct take control of the process rather than cluttered thoughts that only serve to add tension to the process.

Aside from a pre-shot routine, learn to enjoy the scenery, your playing partners and the challenge of playing golf at your best while you are between shots. Then, when it comes time to hit your shot...just slip into your pre-shot routine and let the your instinct take over.

The next time you are playing and recognize a distraction, maybe a player with poor etiquette, challenge yourself to be patient with that person while being able to focus on the task at hand. Let the actions of your pre-shot routine serve to separate you from the distractions of that person and get you into a deepened focus that you always reserve for the task at hand.

If it is more of a physical ailment that is distracting you, let that pain be a trigger to induce deeper focus in the present. This is not easy to do. It is in our nature rather to make excuses for our bad play because of a physical ailment. Can you see how this would be unproductive though? Sometimes, to play at our best, we have to dig deep within and find ways to stay focused and rise above elements that formerly caused us to crumble.



What if you are being distracted by someone else that you know...maybe someone that you have clashed with before, and you cannot help but feel this overwhelming passion to beat him today? This fella might be several groups in front of your group...so that you have no idea what he is shooting.

Maybe you find yourself worrying about what he is shooting to the point that it is distracting what you are doing. You must realize that you have no control over what he is doing and therefore you would be straying into areas of thought that are out of your control. This is a recipe for disaster my friend.

Few things cause anxiety more than worrying about things that are out of our control. Please learn to eliminate thoughts of things that you cannot control and learn to focus on those things that are in your control. Honestly...if I had to pinpoint one area that causes people to play poorly more than any other area...it would be thinking or worrying about things that are out of their control.

Finally, set a personal goal of creating habits that continually put you back into focus and eliminate things that distract you. Remember now...you must create a habit here that accomplishes what I just stated. If it does not become a habit...you will not experience success to the level you would if it does become a habit.

Good golfing!

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